

**Amendments to the Specification:**

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 1, line 6, with the following rewritten paragraph:

--An improved hypotube for an intravascular catheter is disclosed. More specifically, an improved hypotube for use with a catheter is disclosed that provides improved ~~stain~~ strain relief or transitioning stiffness characteristics between a distal end of the hypotube and a proximal end of the catheter.--

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 8, line 6, with the following rewritten paragraph:

--Fig. 12 illustrates a distal end 32f that features a compressed section 61 that forms a stinger. The compressed section 61 also includes a plurality of slits in a ~~eris-cross~~ criss-cross pattern to increase the flexibility of the section 61. Similarly, referring to Fig. 13, a hypotube 30g is illustrated with a distal end section 32g that also features a compressed section 62 with horizontal cuts in the ~~comprised~~ compressed section 62.--